

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

December 15, 1822

Decr. 15th. 1822

I was delighted my dear Maria to see your hand writing again _ and to recognize all that so agreeably was [want?] to accompany it. and am almost ashamed to have permitted it to remain nearly a fortnight unanswered _ from the cheerfulness of your style I infer that you are well, tho' as you rarely complain, and say little about your self when well, I am obliged to reply to the enquiries of your friends on that subject according to the impression your letters leave on my mind. The venerable old Presidents whose sprightly letters were published in our papers yesterday are much more particular on that head, and have given such animated pictures of the superiority of mind _ over the infirmities of the body that if one could hope for similar consolations they would not fear the approach of old age & decrepitude _ I like to see our ancient worthy's look out from "the loop-holes of retreat" upon each other, and give us a peep at their practical philosophy when the evils that "flesh is heir to" have fallen on them. You will say, that religion does as much and more too, for minds less endowed than theirs and I believe so too, but I do not doubt it is from that divine source they are also sustained _ and if we were less tenacious of names we should find all mankind united in closer bonds of brotherhood _

I received a letter from Richmond mentioning Ann's arrival there, on the 9th. of which you have no doubt heard from Charles or herself _ she appeared to me in her very best humour [end of page]

was animated, witty and affectionate _ and I thought looked remarkably well. Mrs. Biddle, with whom she spent the evening observed more change in ~~her~~ [appearance], that she had exchanged her youthful for a more matronly appearance _ we all unite in your wishes that she may find Richmond a home suited to her taste and productive of happiness _

your anxious enquiries about my health my dear friend are very gratifying as proofs of kindness _ my last indisposition was only a severe cold, which by nursing a few days in my chamber I have gotten entirely rid of _ I am not conscious of any imprudence, but you know how difficult it is to begin new habits, and I have been always [blessted] with such good health, that care was superfluous _ during the last autumn

I [had been much] weakened, and became more liable to cold _ but am again quite well _ tho' much thinner than you ever knew me _ I am sorry to hear such bad accounts of Mrs. Campbell, she formerly possessed an excellent constitution, and on that circumstance if she were not exposed to your winter climate, there would be ground to hope for her recovery _ My Sarah is much better _ indeed her health is as good as I have ever known it _ she thinks she has derived benefit from the use of bran bread, and regular diet _ her symptoms have occasionally been similar to those you describe. and Her physicians have thought her in a consumption _

I am not much given to quackery but Swaim's Panacea has made so complete a cure of my brother Hyman, that I have great faith in it _ and am told it has been successfully used in diseases [like] Mrs. Campbell's _ in two weeks after taking it. Hyman was free from pain _ and has had no
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return of either rheumatism or restlessness _ in 18 months before he had not enjoyed a single night's rest _ and he has more over recovered his flesh & complexion _

I hope you are comfortable fixed in your new arrangements and are so well satisfied with your moving _ that may day will find you stationary. have you been looking in to O [Meares?] account of Bonaparte in Exile? I have rarely been more interested in the fate of any one _ and I am quite reconciled in my regard for the personage, since he was really much more human than I used to consider him, when on the throne _ O. M. is rather worse than Boswell. as he wants delicacy & discretion both in exhibiting his illustrious patron _

I hope you will hear better accounts of W. Irving's health than those Mr. Verplanck had _ he should come home [...] [a...ile] and try his native clime _ since you have [dis...d] [...] to him he will no doubt write again. I know how comfortable it is to be reconciled to one's self by paying such debts. and I have many on hand _ besides a good deal of business of a much more unpleasant nature as making up annual accounts for the Orphan Society _ but I should not complain, as I assumed the duty voluntarily and must take the bad with the good _

Adieu my dearest Friend, I long more than ever to see you, so many years have passed away since we met, that we are almost strangers to each other's eyes _ tho' I trust never dearer to each other's hearts,

ever most truly your RG
my best love to your husband
and children _

[Address:]
Mrs. J. O. Hoffman
New York

[Endorsement:]
Miss Gratz